

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, IT
SUBJECT: MILAN POLICE COMMISSIONER ON POLICE AND PUBLIC ORDER

1. SUMMARY. CONGEN AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER CALLED APRIL 8 ON MILAN PROVINCIAL POLICE COMMISSIONER (QUESTORE) ANTONIO SCIARAFFIA. HE IS ASCETIC-LOOKING, WELL-SPOKEN MAN OF ABOVE 55, LIKE MOST POLICE OFFICIALS A SOUTHERNER, AND PREVIOUSLY QUESTORE IN GENOA. HE BELIEVED CRISIS GENERATED BY DE MARTINO KIDNAPPING ONLY AT ITS BEGINNING. WHILE PROUD OF WAY POLICE ARE PERFORMING UNDER CONSTRAINTS, HE SAW LONG STANDING ATTACKS ON ITALIAN FORCES OF ORDER AS HAVING SERIOUSLY ERODED DEMOCRATIC STATE'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF. END SUMMARY.

2. SCIARAFFIA DESCRIBED STILL UNSOLVED KIDNAPPING OF GUIDO DE MARTINO AS FIRST TIME ITALY'S POLITICAL PARTIES HAD BEEN HIT BY KIDNAPPINGS IN POST-WAR HISTORY. (DC DEPUTY KIDNAPPED LAST YEAR IN SICILY AND NOT HEARD FROM SINCE HAD HAD "OTHER SCORES TO SETTLE.") INCIDENT POINTED UP DIFFICULTIES OF POLICE IN COPING WITH LAWLESSNESS AND WAS LATEST EVIDENCE OF WAY VIOLENCE, FEEDING
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ON ITSELF, HAS CONTINUED TO ESCALATE. IMPLICATIONS OF DE MARTINO KIDNAPPING WERE WIDE OPEN AND HE BELIEVED CRISIS AND TENSION WOULD GROW AS DRAMA PLAYED OUT.

3. ONE THING SURE WAS THAT LEFTIST ATTACKS ON AUTHORITY OF STATE OVER LAST 15 YEARS HAD CREATED SITUATION THAT

EVEN LEFTIST PARTIES NOW POWERLESS TO CONTROL. AS COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS HAVE TRIED TO CURB EXCESSES OF THEIR HANDIWORK BY MOVING TOWARD CENTER IN THEIR DEFENSE OF PUBLIC ORDER, EXTREMISTS HAVE RUSHED IN TO OUTFLANK THEM ON LEFT. IN OTHER WORDS, LEFTIST PARTIES HAVING CREATED SECTION OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM DEVOTED TO RUNNING DOWN ITALY'S SOCIAL AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS, THERE WAS NOW NO LACK OF VOLUNTEERS TO CARRY ON THEIR WORK. IRONY WAS THAT ATTACKS ON ITALIAN SOCIETY WHICH COMMUNISTS AND OTHERS SET IN TRAIN WERE NOW TURNED ON COMMUNISTS THEMSELVES.

4. PRESENT ENVIRONMENT WAS NASTY ONE FOR POLICE FORCES. DEMOCRACY THEY WERE CHARGED WITH PROTECTING SEEMED INTENT ON STRIPPING THEM OF MEANS TO DO JOB. SCIARAFFIA WAS AS INTOLERANT OF POLICE CRIMES AS ANYONE. WHEN POLICEMAN ABUSED LAW, HE SHOULD BE PUNISHED. BUT ANSWER WAS NOT TO DESTROY SECURITY INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES. THIS MISGUIDED MENTALITY WAS GIVING CRIMINALS EVER INCREASING ADVANTAGES. LEFTIST JUDGES WERE LOATHE TO SEND MALFACTORS TO PRISON. POLICE HAD NO POWER OF PREVENTATIVE ARREST. AND IF LAWBREAKERS WERE JAILED, THEY COULD NOW COUNT ON RETAINING RIGHTS WHICH MADE THEIR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN CRIME ALL THE EASIER. PRISON REFORM LAW OF LAST FALL, FOR EXAMPLE, ALLOWED CONVICTS TO TELEPHONE WHOMEVER THEY WISHED AT WILL AND FORBADE CENSORSHIP OF THEIR MAIL. SCIARAFFIA FELT THAT THESE MEASURES, ADDED TO OTHER OBSTACLES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT LIKE BANK SECRECY, HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GIVEN CRIMINAL WORLD TREMENDOUS ADVANTAGES WHOSE RESULTS WERE ALREADY EVIDENT.

5. ANOTHER NOTABLE CONTRIBUTOR TO RECENT VIOLENCE, IN SCIARAFFIA'S OPINION, WAS PRACTICE OF THROWING TOGETHER IN PRISON COMMON AND POLITICAL CRIMINALS. LATTER HAVE TENDED TO CONTAMINATE FORMER BY OFFERING THEM POLITICAL CAUSES WHICH JUSTIFY THEIR ATTACHMENT TO VIOLENCE AND OTHER CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR, VIZ. NAP PHENOMENON.

6. BESET WITH THESE BURDENS, SCIARAFFIA ASSERTED WITH CONVICTION, POLICE HAVE PERFORMED NOT POORLY BUT INCREDIBLY WELL. VAST MAJORITY ARE AS DEVOTED TO THEIR DUTY AS EVER, EVEN THOUGH SOME ARE BALKING AT HAVING TO CONTINUE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND ARE GIVING PUBLIC IMPRESSION THAT POLICE ARE DEMORALIZED. SCIARAFFIA DID NOT OPPOSE POLICE UNION IF THAT MEANT POLICEMEN HAVING REPRESENTATIVES WHO WOULD PRESS FOR HIGHER WAGES AND BETTER CONDITIONS. BUT POLICE TO HIS MIND

WERE PUBLIC SERVANTS FOR WHOM STRIKES AND SIMILAR BEHAVIOR COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED.

7. SCIARAFFIA'S HACKLES WERE ALSO RAISED BY CALLS FOR POLICE DEMILITARIZATION. POLICE IN ITALY HAVE ALWAYS HAD PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION, HE ARGUED, SO THERE IS NO QUESTION OF RETURNING TO SOME PRE-FASCIST STATE OF GRACE. MOREOVER, POLICE ARE AND MUST BE SO NUMEROUS THAT THEY CONSTITUTE AN ARMY. HOW DO YOU DEMILITARIZE AN ARMY? CRITICS DID NOT OF COURSE REALLY WANT RELAXATION OF DISCIPLINE. THEY WANTED OPTICAL CHANGES ONLY. BUT THERE WERE FORMAL CHANGES WHICH WOULD UNFORTUNATELY HAVE SUBSTANTIVE EFFECTS ON DISCIPLINE AND EFFICIENCY.

8. ALTHOUGH SCIARAFFIA WAS NOT PESSIMIST, FUTURE TO HIM DID NOT LOOK ESPECIALLY BRIGHT. PARTIES WERE STILL UNABLE TO AGREE ON EFFECTIVE SECURITY LEGISLATION.

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LATION ALTHOUGH DE MARTINO KIDNAPPING JUST MIGHT PRODUCE THEM INTO ACTION. COMMUNISTS, FOR ALL THEIR RESPONSIBLE RHETORIC, REMAINED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME PEOPLE AS BEFORE AND WERE NOT TO BE TRUSTED. IN SUM, SCIARAFFIA SAW NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT POLITICAL WILL TO ENFORCE LAW, SO SADLY DETERIORATED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, WAS ABOUT TO MAKE REAPPEARANCE.

9. AT THE SAME TIME, SCIARAFFIA APPEARED TO BE HIMSELF CONVINCED THAT POLICE FORCES REMAIN HEALTHY AND DETERMINED TO DO THEIR JOB DESPITE CONSTRAINTS TO WHICH THEY HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY SUBJECTED. HE CONTENDED THAT, APPEARANCES SOMETIMES TO THE CONTRARY, POLICE MORALE HAS STAYED HIGH. WHILE HIS OWN FRANKNESS, PERCEPTIVENESS, AND APPARENT DEVOTION TO DUTY LENT CREDIBILITY TO HIS CLAIM, HIS FEELING OF FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE WITH THE LAWLESS CONFIRMS THE GROWING PUBLIC IMPRESSION THAT THE STATE IS INCREASINGLY HARD PUT TO DEFEND ITS CITIZENS AND ITSELF. FINA

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